

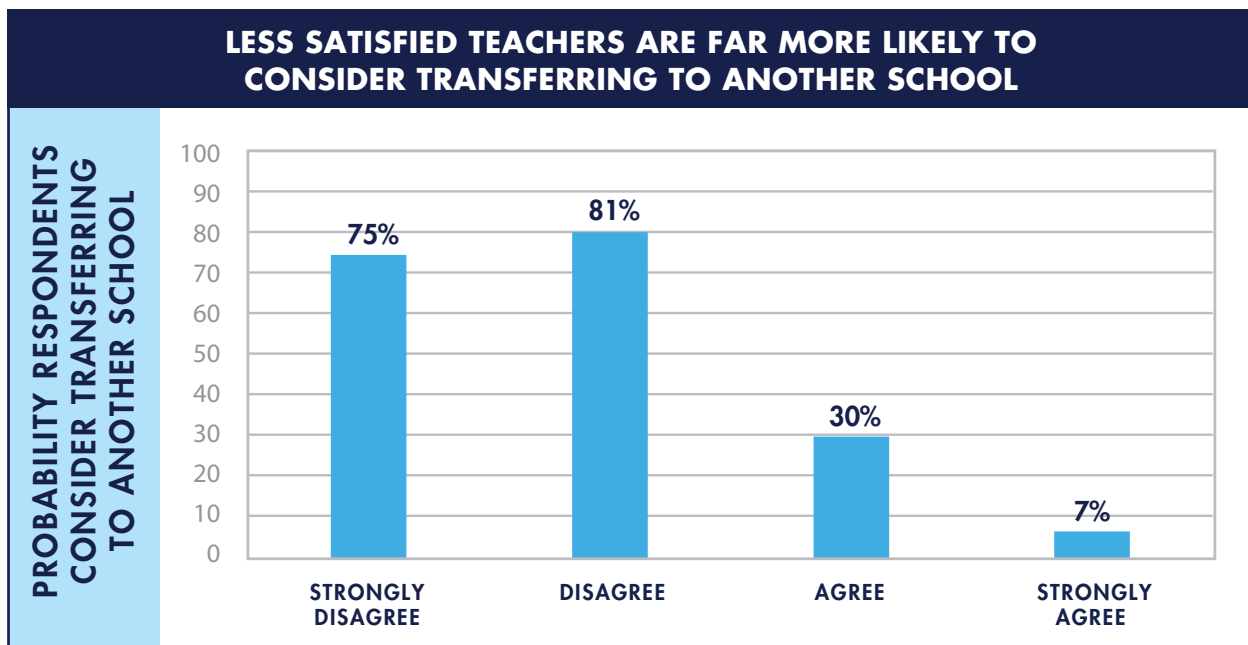
Trends in Teacher Job Satisfaction

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ABOUT THIS SNAPSHOT

This snapshot provides a look into trends in satisfaction among Tennessee teachers. In the 2018 Tennessee Educator Survey, we asked teachers about their current levels of job satisfaction. By analyzing those responses, we document patterns that show which teachers are more satisfied in their jobs, and how the school environment and teachers' feelings about their jobs are related.¹

These trends matter because teacher satisfaction may be linked to teacher retention. Data from this year's survey show that when teachers report being satisfied in their schools, they are less likely to consider transferring to another school. As discussed below, it is also clear that certain factors associate highly with whether teachers feel satisfied in their jobs, which can, in turn, make a difference in whether teachers ultimately choose to stay or leave their schools. TERA will further unpack the relationship between satisfaction and retention in research to come this year.

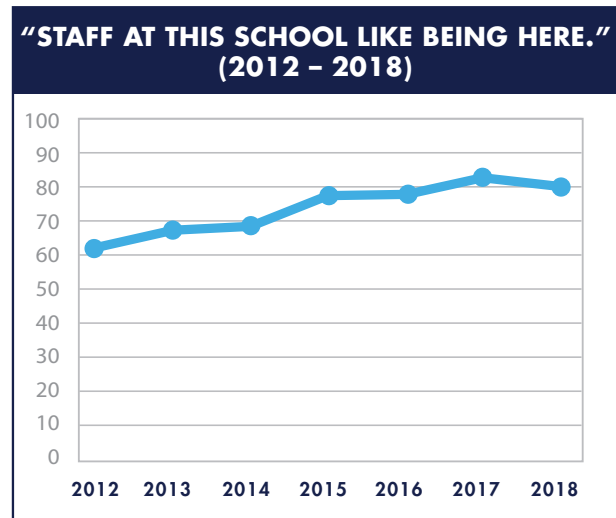
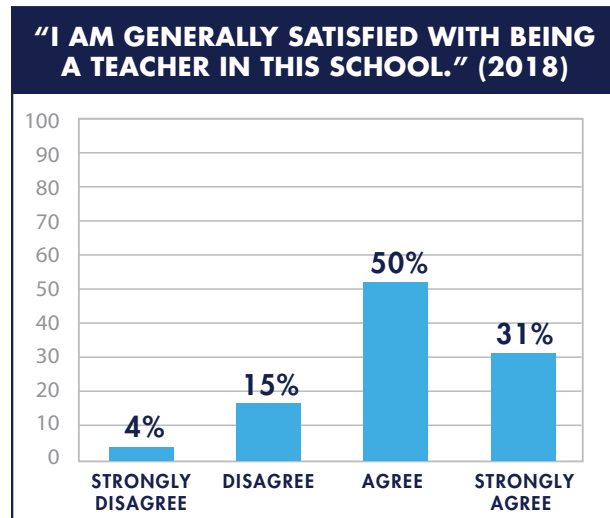


¹ We use a regression model to analyze trends in teacher satisfaction. Because of this regression, the patterns we discuss are those we find after accounting, or “controlling,” for the influence of the other characteristics included in the model. Specifically, we regress a binary variable indicating that a teacher “strongly agreed” that was she satisfied in her current school on a series of teacher (e.g., gender, race, prior-year LOE, highest degree earned, teaching assignment, in-school experience) and school factors (e.g., % economically disadvantaged, % limited English proficiency, school TVAAS, school urbanicity, % non-white staff, reported time spent on discipline). Results were qualitatively similar when we code the outcome to include both “agree” and “strongly agree” responses.

KEY TRENDS

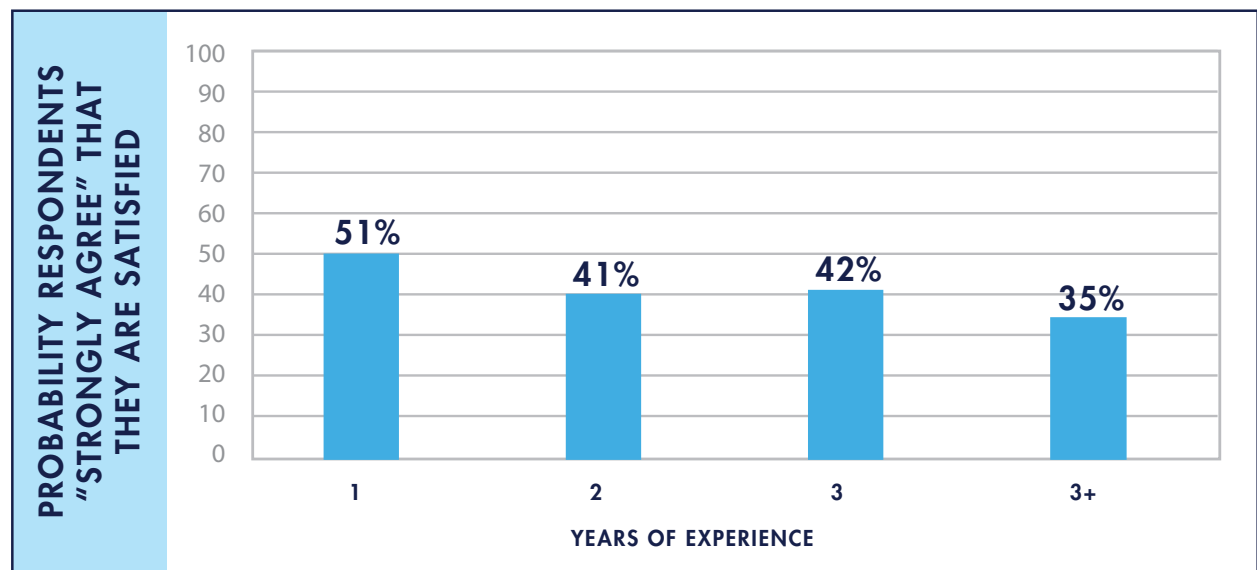
Overall, teachers in Tennessee are satisfied in their current jobs and job satisfaction has steadily increased over time.

In 2018, nearly 90 percent of survey respondents reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that they were satisfied in their current schools and these rates have increased since 2012, the first year of the survey.



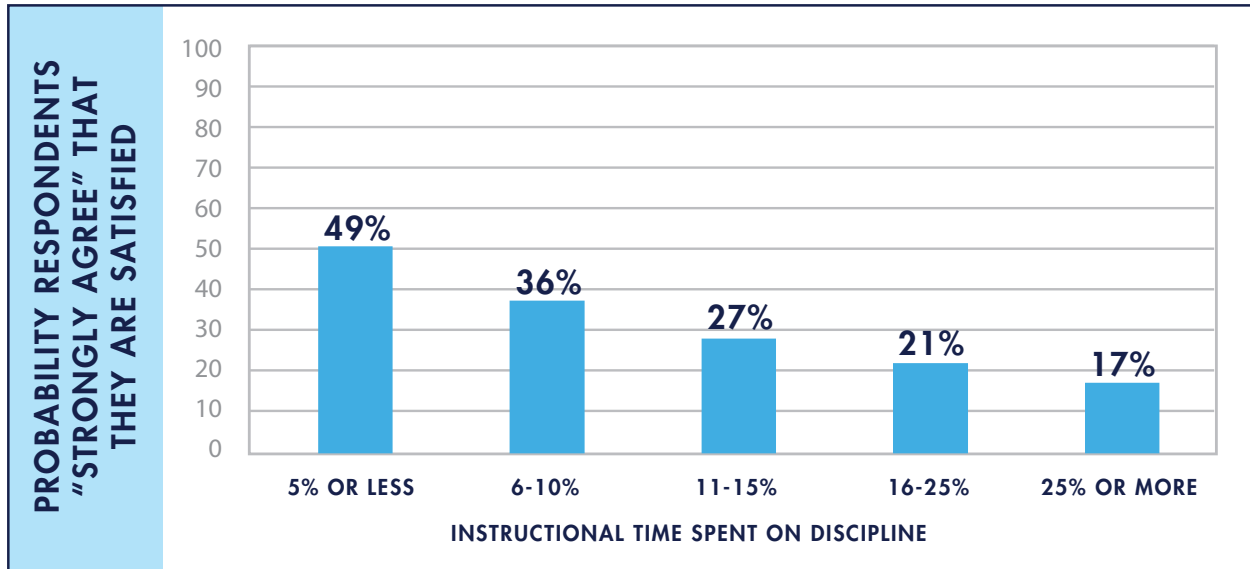
Teachers who have been in their current schools longer were *less likely* to report feelings of satisfaction than teachers who have more recently come to those schools.

Teachers with only one year of experience at their school were significantly more likely to “strongly agree” that they were satisfied in their current school than those who have been there for three or more years.



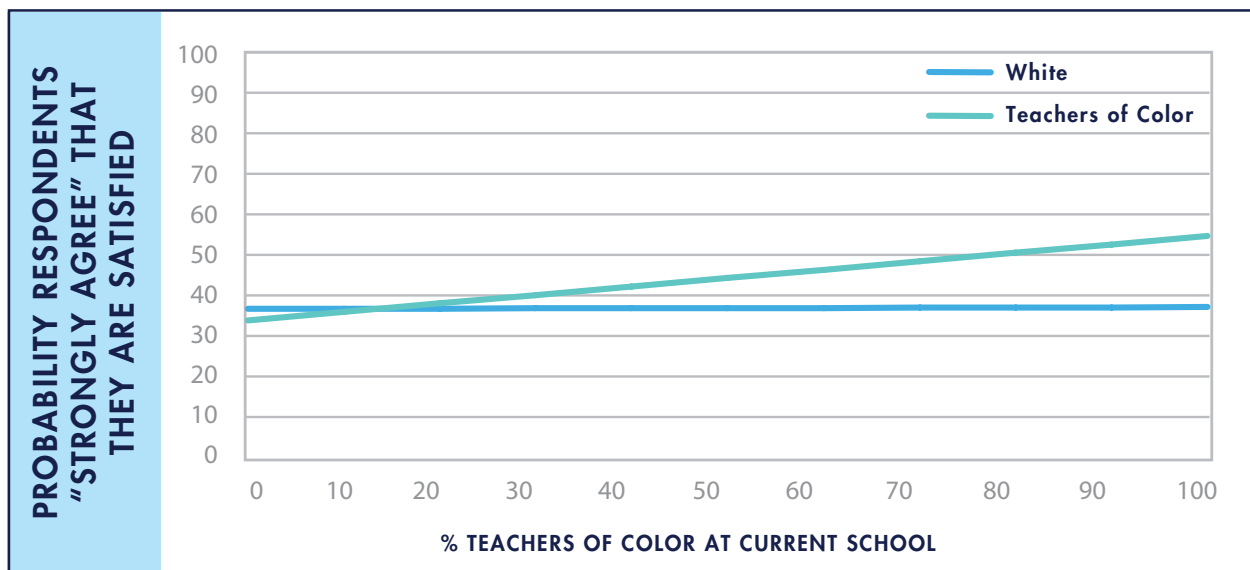
Teachers who spent more time on discipline were less likely to report feeling satisfied in their current positions.

We also found that educators who taught in more challenging environments tended to feel less satisfied in their jobs. Teachers who spent more than 25 percent of their instructional time on discipline were significantly less likely to report feelings of satisfaction than teachers who said they spent less time on discipline issues.



Teachers of color were more likely to report feeling satisfied when their colleagues were more diverse.

Peer racial composition matters when it comes to teacher satisfaction, particularly for teachers of color. Teachers of color were more likely to report feeling satisfied in their current schools when there was a greater percentage of teachers of color at their schools. There was no relationship of this kind for white teachers.





NEXT STEPS FOR RESEARCH

Results from this snapshot show that while teacher satisfaction in Tennessee appears to be high, there are some trends that may be worth looking into more. Continuing to understand more about trends in teacher satisfaction can provide valuable insights as we seek to improve teacher retention across the state. In the coming year, TERA will look more deeply at the relationship between satisfaction and retention, unpacking what factors most predict whether teachers will leave their schools. Research to come in this area will also examine links between teacher satisfaction and issues related to professional learning and teachers' perceptions of how prepared they feel to do their jobs.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

The Tennessee Educator Survey is an annual joint effort by the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) to gather information about schools across the state. Open to all teachers, administrators, and certified staff, the survey is a way for educators to provide feedback about what's working and where improvements can be made in areas like school climate, educator evaluation, and other state initiatives. Survey responses directly inform state research and decision-making processes and are a tool for schools and districts to inform their practice.

In this series, TERA will provide a broad look at responses and trends from 2018 in several key areas relating to educators in Tennessee. Topics include job satisfaction, hiring patterns, growth and professional learning, educator evaluation, aspects of school support roles (assistant principals and instructional coaches), and more.